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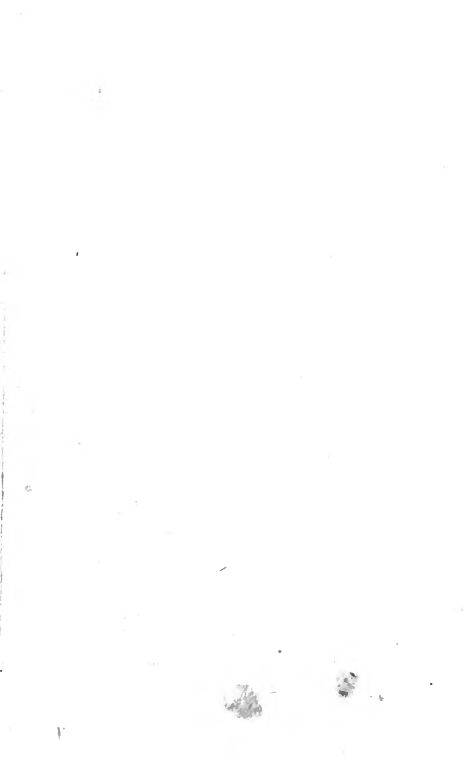
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THE
VILLAGE ORPHAN;
A
TALE FOR YOUTH.

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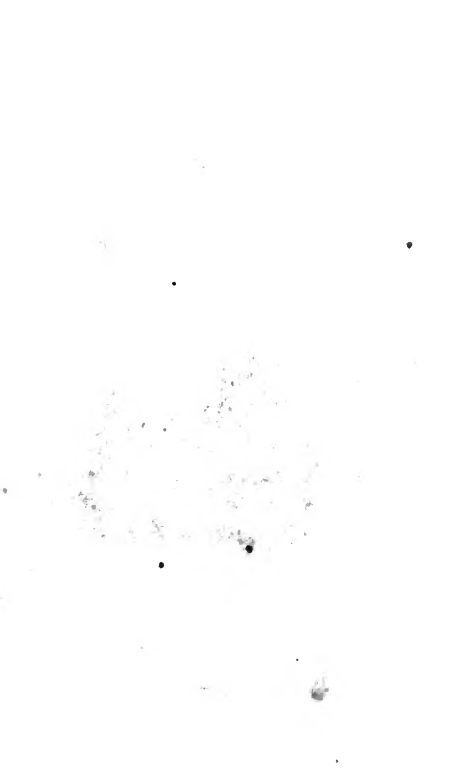
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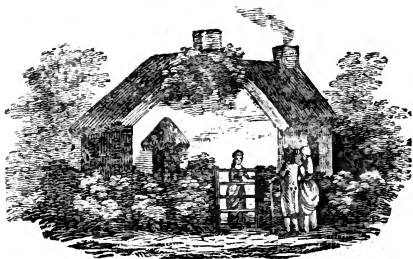


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THIS simple Tale is intended to cherish in the minds of youth, those natural principles of rectitude and benevolence, which powerfully tend to promote the best interest of society, rather by the influence of example arising from a natural unartificial development of incidents, which every day occur in the ordinary walks of human life, than by that of precept, or a studied display of those artificial characters in high life, who move in a sphere far beyond the reach of the ordinary classes of men.

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THE
VILLAGE ORPHAN.

CHAP. I.

MR. and Mrs. Manly, of Woodhall, in Shropshire, used often to remark a beautiful young creature in the village, when they went to church, where she regularly attended, and appeared so de-

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vout and modest, that it was impossible not to be interested about her. They enquired among the tenants who she was; but they could obtain no other information than that she went by the name of Handsome Fanny,---what her surname was no one could tell. She had come to the village with a venerable old woman named Mrs. Epsom, whom she called her aunt, and they were both beloved by the whole village, though they had very little intercourse with its inhabitants, unless when any of them were sick, and then Mrs. Epsom constantly went to see them, and used to give them simple medicines, which, by their efficacy, showed she had no small skill in these matters. Providence blessed every thing she put her hand to, and the village was never so healthy as when she was in it. At last she was

called to receive the reward of her well spent life.

Two days before Mrs. Epsom's death, a young soldier arrived, and went for several hours together every day to sit at the old woman's bed-side. Many of the neighbours wished to return her kindness, by attending her in her sickness, but Fanny would do all herself, and said, " Her aunt did not like any body to come near her but the young soldier and herself." Poor Fanny's anxiety and want of rest, during Mrs. Epsom's illness, left her little strength to support the grief which her death occasioned, and she was wasted away to a skeleton. Every body thought she also would have died; but it pleased heaven at that time to spare her. By degrees, as the violence of her grief abated, she

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sometimes went out to take a walk alone in the fields, and by the side of the river, seeming to avoid the conversation of the good people in the neighbourhood. “ But,” added the old woman who told them this, “ when she does speak to any body, she does it so sweetly, and in so modest a manner, that she is beloved and pitied by every one.”

This account interested them still more about Fanny, and Mr. and Mrs. Manly resolved to see her, and endeavour to comfort her in any manner that might be in their power. Upon enquiring the way, they were directed to the neatest cottage that could be imagined. It was guarded by a large mastiff dog, who was now the only friend poor Fanny had, and watched her humble dwelling so faithfully, that they could not get admittance till she, hear-

ing his barking, came and opened the wicket of the little garden that surrounded her cottage. She seemed surprised at seeing them, and blushed a little; but showed them into a neat little parlour with so much easy elegance, that Mr. Manly was in a moment convinced she had been in a genteeler sphere of life than that in which she now appeared. Mrs. Manly perceived the same, and they were both charmed with her affability and good sense.

Mrs. Manly told her that they had heard, with much concern, of the death of her aunt, which they considered as the greatest loss the parish could have sustained, and that it was but a small tribute of gratitude for the great good she had done in the country, to enquire how her niece was, and condole with

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her on her loss. The kindness of Mrs. Manly's expressions brought a flood of tears into Fanny's eyes. She wiped them away as soon as she could, and thanked them, hoping they would excuse her weakness ; " for," said she, " my dear aunt was the only female friend I had in the world, and now, alas ! I have none."

" You shall soon have other friends, my dear," said Mrs. Manly, " who, if they cannot completely supply the place of your valuable aunt, will at least endeavour to do so as far as lies in their power."

Fanny burst again into tears ; and Mr. Manly changed the conversation, by desiring Mrs. Manly to look at a piece of muslin which Fanny had been working---it was a piece of the most delicate work of the kind either of them

had ever seen, and they beheld it with astonishment. She then showed them several others of different patterns, all wonderfully light and elegant, and of the most exquisite workmanship. She showed them also some of her drawings, which were no less admirable than the needle-work; and surprised them the more agreeably, because they did not expect to see any thing so elegant in such an humble mansion. They found her, in short, so accomplished in every way, and so very agreeable, that they gave her a pressing invitation to go home with them; and were much disappointed that she could not accept of it at that time: but they were afterwards so much in her company, either at their own house or her cottage, that they came to consider her almost as a daughter; and once, when she was seized with a slight

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illness, they were as anxious and unhappy on her account as if she had really been their daughter.

Fanny and her brother, the young soldier before-mentioned, had been left orphans when they were mere infants, in a very forlorn situation; for their father had been killed in an engagement, at a time when his circumstances were so much embarrassed, that his creditors took possession of all the little property he left. This shocking circumstance, added to the grief for the loss of her husband, was the cause of their mother's death, who was of too tender a frame to be able to see herself and her dear children robbed of their only protector, and even deprived of the means of subsistence. She sunk under it after a few weeks illness, leaving them to the care of her aunt Mrs. Epsom, whose bene-

volent disposition, and natural kindness, supplied as much as it was possible, the loss of both father and mother. This lady was not rich, having only a small jointure; therefore when the boy grew up, she was much at a loss what line of business to put him into. He insisted so strongly to follow his father's footsteps in the army, and seemed so miserable at the idea of following any other profession, that she was induced to employ the little interest she had in procuring for him an ensigncy. His father's many glorious achievements, which the boy had from time to time been told of, had so heated his youthful imagination, that he would not admit there was any thing besides merit necessary for advancement, and he wished for no favours from fortune but what he hoped to deserve. His merit however

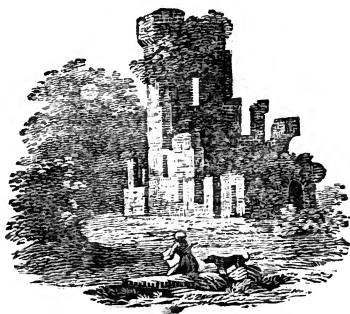
might not perhaps have met with its full reward, had it depended altogether on his superior officers for promotion; but Mr. Manly was no sooner made acquainted with his situation, than his benevolence interfered in his favour, and by private applications procured for him a lieutenancy, which Henry received with astonishment, not knowing how it was obtained.

Mrs. Epsom had lost the greatest part of her little property by the bankruptcy, or, more properly speaking, robbery of a worthless man, in whose hands it had been placed; which misfortune obliged her to remove from the house in which she had lived for fifty years, and retire to this cottage with her Fanny, who was the comfort and support of her old age. Mrs. Epsom's mind was so superior to the vicissitudes of fortune, that she lost

none of her cheerfulness in her new habitation. Her circumstances were however so much reduced, that Fanny thought of turning to profit those accomplishments which she had hitherto considered as merely ornamental. She first endeavoured to dispose of some of her drawings; but the pitiful price that was offered for them, disgusted and hurt her extremely. She met with better encouragement in the sale of her needlework; and soon acquired such a character, that in this part of the country it was almost unfashionable for a lady to appear in Public without some of Fanny's work in her dress; and good judges were never at a loss to distinguish it from that of all others.

By the produce of her industry she had the means of procuring a great many things for her aunt, which otherwise she

must have wanted, especially during her illness ; and after Mrs. Epsom's death, she was enabled to live without being a burthen to any one. Her brother who seemed to have nothing so much at heart as the happiness of his sister, wished to bestow on her a part of his new acquired pay, which in truth was little enough to enable him to appear as others did. Fanny smiled at the offer, saying, she was by far the richer of the two ; and told Mrs. Manley, privately, that she intended, if possible, to save as much money as would buy him a company :---little did she know the difficulty of such an undertaking ; but the simple idea evinced the affection that subsisted between them.



CHAP. II.

FORTUNE seemed not yet tired of persecuting poor Fanny. A young man of respectable parentage in the neighbourhood having seen her frequently, and fallen in love with her, paid his addresses to her about this time. This gentleman had formerly been particu-

larly attentive to Miss Trunse, a young lady whose father was very rich, and Fanny's landlord. Mr. Trunse's family were low ignorant people, who had acquired a large fortune by a niggardly economy ; and without any other superiority over their former equals, they expected all that deference and respect which persons of high rank generally receive from poorer people, on account of their better education and superior refinements, as well as their birth and fortune. With these notions you may conceive the indignation of Miss Trunse when she saw herself forsaken by a person whom she looked upon as a lover, for the sake of such a poor despicable creature as Fanny was, in her estimation.

There is no reason to believe that any of Miss Trunse's passions, besides

her pride, were interested in this affair ; for although Mr. Playfair was handsome, and in a very respectable situation, as well as of genteel connections, yet it is not unlikely that her ambition secretly aimed at a husband with a much larger fortune than Mr. Playfair possessed. However this may be, she certainly from that time conceived a most inveterate hatred towards Fanny, and secretly resolved to work her ruin. She at first thought to prevail on her father to turn this harmless creature out of her cottage, under one pretext or other ; but upon second thoughts, that appeared too glaring, and would give the world too much reason to suspect the true cause. Her next project was to make Fanny pass for a witch, and make it be believed she had intercourse with the devil. She knew how

apt the country people were to credit these things ; and her only care was, to manage it so that she might not be suspected of being concerned in the report. She began by asking her own servant maid, who was well adapted to her purpose, if she had not heard certain noises in the night, or seen any thing strange ? The servant, whose imagination was always full of superstitious notions, answered fearfully, “ Aye, for certain I heard something last night and several nights before, but I have not seen any thing, because *for why*, I was asleep.” ‘ Was it not moonlight ?’ said her mistress, with a certain mysterious look. “ Yes, sure, it was full moon,” replied Betty. ‘ Full moon ? Indeed !’ cries her mistress, staring as if she were terrified. Betty enquired with great eagerness if Miss Trunse knew any

thing, who then pretended to be very thoughtful ; and after a pause, said, No, nothing, good christians *needs* have no fear : ' she then left the maid with her curiosity and terror wound up to the highest pitch.

A day or two afterwards, Miss Trunse asked the maid if she had ever seen a horse's skull and some human bones near Mr. Manly's Tower? The girl had not observed them. Miss Trunse then enquired if she had ever seen any body walking with a dog that way, at the time of full moon? " For certain I have," cries Betty, " and it was handsome Fanny." ' Indeed ! ' exclaimed her mistress mysteriously. Poor Betty was now almost distracted with these strange questions ; and began to think what could Fanny be doing there at

that time; and with the dog too? She recollected that the mastiff was the most growling illnatured cur that ever she had seen, to every body but his mistress, to whom he was as gentle as a lamb, and her constant attendant wherever she went. The horse's skull and the bones also appeared to her so mysterious, that she resolved to see if there were such at the place mentioned, and found them. She then told some of her neighbours that Fanny went there at full moon, when every body else was asleep, and did something with these bones, all of which, except the skull, she called human; and that at the last full moon she had heard the strangest noises, like screams and ringing of bells underground.

Miss Trunse perceived that the story succeeded; and to forward it, asked

the maid if old Mrs. Epsom had not a mole on her chin? Upon enquiry amongst the neighbours, Betty found she had. Many other artful questions of a like nature were asked, tending to make Mrs. Epsom appear uncommon in her person and manner of living. Betty asked all these questions over again, and the report spread. To crown all, several of the neighbours determined to watch Fanny on the night of the full moon, to discover if she went to the place where the bones lay.

It happened that very night, that Fanny went to make a drawing of the tower by moonlight, as by that light she thought it made a particularly picturesque appearance. She was so fond of drawing, that she resolved to go in spite of her fears, accompanied by her faithful dog; and was seen by those who watched her, to

go to the very spot where the bones lay. She sat down and took a hasty sketch of the building ; and those who saw her, instead of going to learn what she was doing, ran away as soon she reached the place, terrified lest she should bring up some evil spirit to devour them.

Poor Fanny paid a dear price for her sketch ; for the next day, going to the village to buy something, she observed the people all ran away as soon as they saw her ; nobody was to be found in any shop she went into, and the doors of all the neighbours were shut at her approach. The next day she met with the same unaccountable treatment, and the day following also ; so that she might have died for want had she not had Mrs. Manly to resort to, who, on enquiring in the village what was the matter, was advised to have nothing to

do with Fanny, for she was no other than an old witch, who had sold herself to the devil for the power of calling evil spirits, and making herself handsome:—that old Mrs. Epsom had been the same, but that as her time was out, she would do no more harm; and they hoped God would forgive them for having taken medicines from her.

Mrs. Manly would have been disposed to laugh at this absurd simplicity, had she not perceived the disagreeable consequences that were likely to accrue from it to Fanny. She wondered how they had happened to pitch upon her for the subject of this ridiculous story, and would have suspected some malice to be at the bottom of it, if she had conceived it possible for any one to harbour an ill-will against such a sweet and innocent creature; however, she

determined to discover the origin of it and easily traced it to Miss Trunse's maid. Mrs. Manly then thought proper to consult her husband before she took any farther steps in the affair ; who immediately suspected Miss Trunse, for he knew the circumstance of Mr. Playfair having forsaken her for Fanny.

This worthy couple resolved to wait upon Miss Trunse, and complain of the conduct of her maid, and thereby endeavour to make what discoveries they could. Miss Trunse received them with stiff politeness. She pretended not to have heard the story, and called Betty, who told them simply that she firmly believed Fanny to be a witch, and told what had been already related about her going to the tower, and the noises she imagined she heard, the bones and other circumstances. When they en-

quired how she had first discovered or suspected that Fanny was a witch, she repeated to them the questions her mistress had asked. ‘You impudent slut,’ cries Miss Trunse, ‘are you going to father your scandalous inventions and stories upon me? Because I asked if you had heard any noise, or seen any body at that tower, is that *for* to say that I said that the young woman was a witch?’ ‘Dear Madam,” cries Betty, “I never said that your *la-ship* said *no* such thing.” ‘You sauce-box,’ cries Miss Trunse, how *dares* you speak to me in that *there* manner? Go, pack this moment, you impudent baggage, you shall not sleep another night in this house; *for* to go and raise evil reports upon people, and then put them at my door.’ Mr. and Mrs. Manly interceded in favour of the girl, and begged Miss

Trunse would attribute it to her simplicity and ignorance. ‘I don’t mind the story a fig,’ answered this sweet young lady, ‘if she had not attempted to lay it upon me. As for the young woman being a witch, it may be true for any thing I *knows*, but I would scorn to trouble my head about such a *poor* creature. To be sure she does not live as *us* christians *does*; and it is as likely she should deal with the devil as any other person; and to be sure there must be something in it, else how could she make people think her so handsome as they *does*; for I’m sure I don’t think her handsome at all for my part; she has not enough of red in her cheeks for me. Besides this great monstrous dog she has got; and I have been told she has a great many books, which she keeps in a little closet; and

you know what would poor folks like her do with books, if it were not for *some purpose or other*?—Folks may think what they please, you know Ma'am, but that is a different thing from raising reports, and I'm resolved to turn Betty out of doors this very day for her *presumption*.' It was in vain they begged Miss Trunse to forgive the poor girl, and not ruin her for mere ignorance, as it was evident she could have no bad design in what she had done. Miss Trunse persisted in her determination, no doubt with a view of taking away all suspicions from herself: but her illnature towards Fanny showed itself in her remarks in spite of her, as she could not refrain from endeavouring to persuade them indirectly that Fanny was a witch in reality.

As Mr. and Mrs. Manly were the cause of Betty's being turned out of place, they thought it their duty to recommend her to another; so they desired her to call upon them, which she did the next day. They found her a very innocent good sort of girl; but so much exasperated against Miss Trunse, that she had a great mind to tell something bad of her; but this Mrs. Manly would not listen to. They told her what Fanny was doing at the tower, and shewed her the drawing, which was now finished, and tried to convince her what a foolish and even wicked thing it was to take such a notion into her head; but they soon perceived that it was to no purpose to talk to her on that subject; so they sent her home to her mother, and soon after recommended her to a much better place than the one she had lost.

Mr. Playfair still continued to throw himself into Fanny's company as often as possible, although she had repeatedly told him she never could love him, and therefore never would marry him. He knew, however, that Fanny's heart was not in the possession of any other, and hoped that acquaintance and habit would render him more agreeable to her; in the mean time he saw so many beauties and perfections in her, that his love became almost madness. There was something in this that shocked Fanny's extreme delicacy, and gave her infinite uneasiness:—she could not bear the idea of being the cause of misery to a deserving young man who loved her. On this subject, as on all others, she spoke freely to Mrs. Manly, who was at a loss how to advise her; and

they had this matter in consideration at the very time when the story of the witch happened, which made them immediately resolve that it would be the best plan for her to leave that part of the country. It happened, luckily, that Mr. Manly had just bought a small estate in the county of Caernarvon, where they intended to reside during the summer. This seemed a very proper spot for Fanny to retire to, as they would be as much in her neighbourhood there as where they were ; and she would be in many respects much more pleasantly situated. The plan was no sooner mentioned to Mr. Manly, than he proposed that as he was going there the very next day to examine the premises, she should accompany him, and choose a spot for herself, where he would build a cottage for her, if none already built should be

found to her mind. This proposal she cheerfully accepted; and accordingly they set off together, in a one-horse chaise early in the morning, without either servant or baggage, John having gone away some days before, to prepare for Mr. Manly's reception.





CHAP. III.

THE morning was fine, and every thing seemed cheerful but Fanny. When they went past her cottage, which is within sight of the road, she could not refrain from sobbing. Mr. Manly endeavoured to comfort her, by telling her, that if her landlord would part with that spot, he intended to purchase it, and plant a grove round it, and make a kind of library of the cottage, sacred to the

memory of Mrs. Epsom. At Mr. Manly's request she promised that she would endeavour to make a portrait of her aunt, to put into it, from several imperfect sketches which she had formerly taken. Mr. Manly then asked what kind of situation she would like for her new dwelling; and from that turned the conversation to indifferent subjects, so that she soon got into high spirits, and looked so charmingly, that he was really proud to see the people admiring her as they drove through the villages.

They breakfasted at a small inn, and proceeded with such expedition, that they were within twelve miles of their journey's end about one o'clock. Here an accident put a stop to their journey for some time.

It was on a small rising ground, where they had the first view of the sea,

that they slackened their pace a little to enjoy the cheerful landscape, when a little girl, who did not seem to be a beggar, came running out of a field, crying bitterly, and begged them for pity to come and assist her mother, who, she feared, was dying. Mr. Manly gave Fanny the reins, and alighted to go to the poor woman, who was indeed very ill; but Mr. Manly did not know what to do for her, as she could neither speak nor make any sign, unless by opening her eyes when he enquired what was her ailment.

While he stood perplexed what he should do, a fowling-piece went off in an adjoining field, not fifty yards from the spot where they were; the report frightened the horse, who plunged, and endeavoured to run off. Fanny was barely able to hold him till the young

man, who fired the gun, seeing her situation, leaped through the hedge to her assistance. At the hazard of his life he ran to the horse's head, and caught hold of the bridle; but not before the creature had broken one of the shafts, so that in another moment, perhaps, Fanny would have been dashed to pieces, had it not been for this timely aid. Mr. Manly having heard Fanny's cries, came up a few moments after, and helped her to alight, while the young man held the horse; they then unyoked and tied him to the hedge to recover from his fright, while Mr. Manly led the young man and Fanny to the sick woman, to consult what could best be done.

The girl said her mother lived a great many miles off, and that nobody in this place knew her; she was a widow, and had several children besides herself.

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Her eldest sister had just gone, for the first time, to service, where they had been to accompany her, and were returning home, when her mother, all of a sudden, complained of a pain in her breast, and became so ill, that she was obliged to lie down about a quarter of an hour before they came. In the first place, Mr. Manly took off his great coat, and spread it under her, lest she should suffer from the dampness of the grass, till they could determine what to do.

The young man informed them there was no house nearer than a village about half a mile off, which they could not then see for a small hill, and that if in any way they could carry the woman thither, she would be taken very good care of.—His father was the vicar of the parish, and he would not be happy if

Mr. Manly and Fanny did not accept of such accommodation as they might find at his house, till they should be enabled to proceed on their journey; for the nearest inn, which was a wretched one, and at least three miles off.

After a little consideration they accepted the offer; but the next question was how to get the woman transported thither; on examining the carriage, they agreed that the best method would be to put her into it, such as it was, and walk beside it, leading the horse gently along. So they first secured the broken shaft in the best manner they could, and then placed the woman in the chaise with the child to support her; in this manner they safely entered the village, well stared at, as may be supposed by the good people therein. They soon arrived at the vicarage, where they met

with a hearty reception from Mr. Seton the worthy parson. He is a man who has seen much of the world; but the most wonderful thing that he has remarked in it, according to his own account, is, that people do mean and dishonest actions for the sake of trifling enjoyments, which could be much more easily obtained by fair dealing; thus throwing away their self-approbation, and the good opinion of others, for nothing. Mrs. Seton was a frugal cheerful woman, and very entertaining in conversation. She was much pleased with Fanny, and regretted exceedingly that her daughter was not at home to be introduced to her.

Mr. Seton having ordered the poor woman to bed, whose complaint was the cramp in the stomach, conducted Mr. Manly to some workmen in the village,

to give orders for repairing the chaise, which they found could not possibly be done till the following evening : in the mean time they passed a very pleasant afternoon with this agreeable and amiable family. Miss Seton came home in the evening and Mr. Manly was very much charmed with her appearance. She had a musical turn, and entertained them with many charming airs, sweetly sung, and accompanied with exquisite taste by the guittar, which seemed in her hands to possess powers they never before had thought of attributing to that simple instrument. The next day they visited the patient, and found her so much recovered, that Mr. Seton expected she would be able to get home in a few days. She was very uneasy about her family at home, expressing much

fear lest some accident should happen in her absence. Mr. Manly enquired, particularly, where her house was, and finding it in the neighbourhood of his new-bought estate, promised to visit the young ones, and see that they wanted nothing. The hour of departure at last arrived, and, notwithstanding their impatience to proceed on their journey, Fanny could not leave this happy spot without much regret. Young Mr. Seton accompanied them a few miles on horseback, and pointed out the different gentlemen's seats, and other objects, within view of the road.



CHAP. IV.

MR. MANLY'S first care, on his arrival, was to perform his promise to the sick woman, whose children were all well, and taken good care of by the honest neighbour under whose charge they had been left. They afterwards examined the house and gardens, and found them in excellent order. On the west side of the house is a thick wood, through

which a winding walk leads to a river that cheerfully runs in a clean gravel channel, forming little pools plentifully stocked with fish. The opposite bank is a high rocky cliff, covered with trees, which seemed absolutely inaccessible, till walking a little way down by the side of the stream, they found an old bridge, half mouldered away, and half covered with ivy. Fanny was delighted with the romantic scene. Having passed over the bridge, they found their way obstructed by a locked iron grate, that seemed the entrance of a dark cavern, of which they could see no termination. ‘Have you any curiosity,’ said Mr. Manly, ‘to see what is at the bottom of that cavern?’ Fanny asked what was to be seen there? ‘I will not tell you,’ answered he, ‘but you may satisfy yourself if you choose,’ to which she

assented. Mr. Manly then unlocked the grate ; as they went into the cavern it soon became so dark that they were obliged to grope their way, and Fanny confessed she was a little afraid. They however proceeded, and at last came to a chink, through which appeared some light ; this was a door which Mr. Manly knew how to open by touching a secret spring. The reader may picture to himself the delight and astonishment which beamed in Fanny's countenance, when she found herself in a most enchanting garden.

I shall not attempt to describe either her wonder or the place which excited it ; but merely say, that this was once a freestone quarry, out of which the materials of many neighbouring houses had been taken. The last proprietor

having many children, and consequently much noise in his house, and being of a studious and romantic turn of mind, had got it cleared out and formed into a garden, in which he built a summer-house or study, whither he retired when he wished not to be disturbed. By degrees he became so fond of the place, that it was his greatest pleasure to improve and embellish it with all he thought beautiful in art or nature. The rocks all around were so high and perpendicular, that there was no access to this sweet retirement but through the cavern ; besides, the top of the cliff was so covered with copse and prickly brush wood, that nobody could get up even to look at it.

When they had examined the garden, and admired every thing sufficiently, their notice was next turned to the

summer-house. It consisted of several rooms highly finished, but plain and elegant. Mr. Manly asked Fanny, whether she would like to live here ? She shook her head, and said she was not rich enough to pretend to be tenant of such a place. “ The value of it is not so very great,” said Mr. Manly ; I must be honest with you, if you do not take it I cannot hope for another tenant ; and I should be loth to let it run to waste, which must be the case if somebody does not occupy it ; for I have so many other things to look after, that this must be neglected.” ‘ But I shall be obliged to keep a gardener,’ said Fanny. “ No such thing,” replied Mr. Manly, “ my men will be often idle, and you can now and then have one to do all your little work.”

While they were talking thus, a poor

cat, who seemed to be at the last stage of leanness, came mewling towards them, as if begging something to eat. ‘ This poor cat has been left and confined here,’ cries Fanny ; ‘ what has she got to eat ? ’ “ Truly little enough, in all appearance,” said Mr. Manly. Fanny happened to have a bit of cake in her pocket, which she gave her ; but instead of devouring it, as they expected, the cat looked about and mewled, as if calling some friend to partake with her. No answer being made, she pricked her ears, and ran through some bushes. Curiosity impelled Mr. Manly and Fanny to follow her. She ran to a dog-kennel, which they had not before perceived, and there they found a spaniel almost dead from hunger. The cat licked his forehead, and endeavoured to awaken him ; he looked up, and

moaned piteously. The cat looked up also in their faces, and mewled with the most expressive tone and countenance; then seeming to recollect something, ran away suddenly, and returned with the piece of cake, which she laid down at the spaniel's mouth. The dog, a little revived by the smell, tasted it; but he was so weak, that his head fell down again before he had eaten it all.

The tears flowed down Fanny's face at this moving sight. There being some workmen at a little distance, Mr. Manly ran and sent one of them to get what he could at the nearest house for these poor animals, and he soon returned with victuals of different kinds. Mr. Manly poured some milk down the dog's throat, and gave the cat some, which she did not now refuse. This was an instance of friendship in a brute,

which neither Fanny nor Mr. Manly expected to meet with ; for the poor cat shewed, when they gave her a bit of beef, that it was not from want of appetite she had given the cake to her companion.

“ I love this cat,” said Fanny, “ she has a heart like a human being.” I wish we could always meet with such disinterestedness in human beings,’ rejoined Mr. Manly. The animals now shewed such an appetite, that they were afraid to indulge it for fear of killing them : besides, it was time for them to depart : so they left them to the care of the honest man who brought the food.

Mr. Manly having finished all his business, he and Fanny set out homewards, were they arrived without any cross or remarkable accident. They

had a great desire to call on their new friends as they passed the village, but they had been too long from home to permit it.

In the course of two months, during which nothing remarkable happened, Mr. Manly's house was ready for their reception, and the family removed to Grove Place, accompanied by Fanny. Her hermitage was neatly fitted up, and she took little Mary (the woman's daughter whom they had found on the road) as a servant, who shewed much affection and fidelity to her mistress. Nor did Fanny forget her old friends, the cat and spaniel, who were now sleek handsome animals, and soon became acquainted and familiar with the grave mastiff. Mr. Manly used to banter her on her companions, calling her an old maid, obliged to resort to

cats and dogs for company, which she took with great good humour.

Notwithstanding all these preparations for her abode, her home was, properly speaking, Mr. Manly's house; for they were never happy but when she was there. Indeed she lived continually with them; and Mr. Manly got a harpsichord for her, which she took great delight in. They knew her delicacy was so accute, that had they proposed to her to live entirely with them, it would have given her an idea of dependence; whereas, in the way they managed, she came and went as she pleased, without any constraint or ceremony.

As Mr. Manly's house was within eight miles of Mr. Seton's village, they took the first opportunity of introducing Mrs. Manly there. During this visit, which lasted for some time, they had

more leisure than formerly to examine the beauties of the place, which is very interesting. The village, as has been told, stands in a hollow, through the middle of which runs the same river that flows past Mr. Manly's house; but here it is only a small stream. A stone-throw from the village are the ruins of an old abbey, and beyond that a castle of very singular appearance, of which more shall be said in the following chapters.





CHAP. V.

MR. SETON was much beloved by every body who knew him. He devoted all the time which he could spare from his studies, and the instruction of his young family, to the improvement of the morals of his parishioners ; and having a little knowledge of physic, he attended the sick with all the care of a tender father. This amiable conduct made him so universally respected by the villagers,

that every one of them eagerly strove to follow his advice; and they never slept so sweetly as after his having approved of any of their actions. Every thing thrived under his wisdom and goodness; the very beasts and trees partook of the blessings which he distributed around him. A good man has much in his power; and Mr. Seton had every day the satisfaction of viewing the effects of his benevolence.

This spot had in ancient times been a place of considerable resort for the nobility, as is still to be seen from the many beautiful ruins of old castles, all of which, excepting one, are nearly reduced by time to the ground. This castle appears to have been one of the largest and most magnificent amongst them; and the proprietors of it seem to

have been at great pains not only to secure it against the attacks of an enemy, but even to hide it from view. It is about half a mile distant from the village; and together, with four acres of land that surround it, is encompassed on all sides by a very deep fosse, and an high stone wall of immense thickness, between which and the castle, all around, are numberless venerable yew and cedar trees of great height; so that a spectator, standing on the outside of the fosse, can see no part of this castle, except a few of the gothic spires and turrets rising here and there above the tops of the trees. At the great gate there is a drawbridge, which regularly every night was drawn up by the porter when the seven o'clock bell struck; so that it would have been no easy matter to have gained admittance after that hour.

There was not a man or woman in the village who had ever been across this drawbridge, nor would have gone for the castle, and all that belonged to it; as in spite of Mr. Seton's remonstrances, old and young, believed it to be infested by all the evil spirits which imagination could paint. Nay, there were none among them who had not some dismal story to tell of what they had actually seen. Though they differed in their very hideous narrations, yet they all agreed that it was under the dominion of an old man, who had been murdered there in the time of queen Elizabeth. This discovery was made by an old school-master, who, it was understood, paid dearly for having divulged the secret, as he did not live four years after it.—“Poor man!” they

would say, “to meet with such a fate at eighty years of age.”

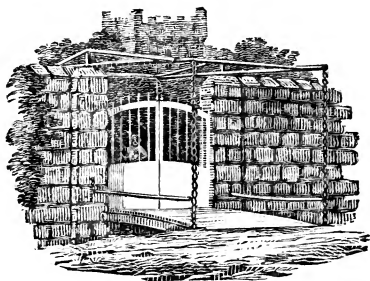
They had all seen the old man of the castle after sunset, when every thing began to be silent, walk slowly up to the gate, and look through the gratings; he was always wrapped in a long white gown, sometimes he wore a black cap, sometimes a white, and they had also seen him with a red cap;—many of the villagers asserted they had remarked his neck covered with blood; and whenever he saw any one near, he instantly vanished. What added to the singularity of these accounts was the manner in which the Porter lived, who was the only human being they had ever seen about the place. This porter was very old; and, it appeared, was both deaf and dumb. Every morning, at eleven o'clock, he came down to the market-

place, to buy necessaries; he always pointed to what he wanted, and held out his purse for them to take the value; which having done, he took it silently up, and walked away. The figure of this man, as well as his antique garments, were subjects of real curiosity; but all attempts to get any intelligence from him by signs were ineffectual, as he always appeared displeased at their curiosity, and clapped his hand upon his mouth; not one of them believed that this man was dumb by the visitation of God Almighty, but that he was under the influence of the old man of the castle, who would put him to death if he spoke a word.

Mr. Seton was an early man, as he hardly ever was to be seen out after dark; and his parishioners never could prevail on him to accompany them to

the gate of the castle. His reasons for this were not merely to discountenance their foolish ideas ; he had other reasons, which will be disclosed hereafter.





CHAP. VI.

MR. SETON had married, at the age of thirty-five, a lady from a distant part of the country, about eight years younger than himself, of good sense and well educated, being also a clergyman's daughter. He got with her as he expected, very little money, and therefore could not be at all disappointed on this score; he considered the other qualities

of a wife as the essential ones, and in these he had the good fortune to be no more disappointed than he was with the want of portion.

Mr. Seton's living would have by no means admitted them to have indulged any kind of extravagance; but not having any inclination that way, it enabled them to enjoy every comfort and happiness to which they aspired. Their house was neat and commodious, and an excellent garden provided them with abundance of fruit and vegetables of every kind. There being no inn of any description within a considerable distance of the village, a few spare bedrooms were always ready for the accommodation of benighted travellers, when such occasions happened, which was indeed seldom. No strangers ever left the house without veneration and

gratitude for the hospitality with which they were entertained.

Mr. Seton took very great pains not only to instil into William's mind from his infancy those principles of morality and religion to which he himself so strictly adhered, but instructed him in the different branches of education most likely to ensure the respect of the world and his own happiness. William was an active and clever boy, and made rapid progress in his lessons; so that at the age of fourteen he was well acquainted with the French and Latin languages, and had made a little progress in the Greek. He had read the Roman poets and historians with extreme pleasure, and received from their descriptions such an inclination for a military life, that he prevailed with his father to allow him to be a soldier.

An uncle of his, who was a major of foot, had long solicited Mr. Seton to place his son under him in his regiment; but he never, till he saw William's mind so intently bent on the army, would consent to it, as he had entertained a wish to bring him up to the church. However he was too good a father, and too sensible a man, to think of forcing the inclinations of his son in this respect, and William was too sensible of his father's goodness to require it in any other: besides, from the major's interest in the army, and his son's abilities, Mr. Seton had hopes of his being honourably advanced.

The day was fixed for William's departure for an academy in the vicinity of London; where his uncle thought it necessary he should be placed for a few years, in order to be perfected in ma-

thematics, and receive a general knowledge of tactics. After a sorrowful parting with his mother and little sister, and followed with the blessings of the whole village, William proceeded with his father on horseback to a town about fifteen miles distant, to join the London stage coach. The thoughts of being a soldier at first kept up his spirits, and he bore his parting like a hero; but when he began to lose sight of his father's house, and those spots where he had spent so many happy days, his heart failed him, and he burst into tears, it was not till they had gone on a few miles that he could speak a word. His father's ingenuity however in drawing his attention to the different objects they passed, at length composed him, and a long lecture of advice on the

new life he was about to enter into succeeded, which there is no doubt William, from his future conduct strove to follow; as well as the many others which he had received from his worthy father.

They were got within about two miles of the town, when William thought he might ask his father a few questions, about a subject which had for many years interested him, and which Mr. Seton had always shewn a reluctance to enter upon:—this was no other than the castle already mentioned. He had listened with avidity to the many wonderful stories of the people; and though his education taught him to despise the idea of supernatural spirits, yet from the singularity of the porter, and the universal accounts of the old man, he was convinced there must be

some strange mystery in the castle. “Pray,” said he to his father, “what is the reason you never wish to talk about the castle?” “I never like, William, said Mr. Seton, to speak upon any subject with which I am unacquainted; and you know, my dear, I have frequently expressed to you how careful you ought to be to guard against this: people who attempt to shew their wisdom in this respect, as indeed in every other, always commit a mistake; for they not only expose their vanity, but force their ignorance upon the world, generally unasked.” “But,” said William, “though you may not be acquainted with the particulars, yet, from the knowledge you have of the world, you must be able to account in some measure for those strange appearances, which every one in the village has wit-

nessed. What necessity would there be for the porter to draw the bridge every night if no one lived there? And above every thing, who can that bloody old man be?" He stopped sometime for an answer. "William," said Mr. Seton, "rest assured that no harm can happen to any body from the castle. It is true, I know a little more than you, but very little; and there are circumstances which render it improper that you should be made acquainted with the little that I do know. Be a good boy, and let not idle curiosity lead away your mind from the desire of satisfying itself in points of more consequence." William was a dutiful son, and never remonstrated with his father upon the propriety of his advice; in spite of himself, however, his father's reluctance to gratify his curiosity raised it manifold.

It is not necessary to give a circum-

stantial detail of the progress William made at school; suffice it, that at the end of three years, with the assistance of a natural inclination to receive instruction, and under the tuition of the most approved masters, he was so compleat a mathematician, particularly in those branches which related to military tactics, that his uncle got him appointed ensign in his own regiment. His uniform was made, and two months leave granted to see his friends. William's heart throbbed with joy at the thoughts of so soon visiting his favourite village. He was resolved to surprise his father's family with his presence, and the joyful tidings of having received his commission.

The day was far advanced when he arrived at the town where he had parted

66 *The Village Orphan.*

with his father ; he would not, however, be prevailed on to stay at the inn all night ; after eating a hasty dinner, he ordered a horse and proceeded to his native village. His impatience would have induced him to hurry forward with all possible expedition ; but William could not treat a dumb animal cruelly, and he rather chose to curb his impatience than over fatigue the poor horse.

The moon shone bright, and the castle bell tolled ten as he passed the southern wall ; his curiosity, in place of being abated, was, if possible, increased by absence. He had never been there before at night, and the stilness and antiquity of the scene struck him with a venerable awe. No noise was to be heard but his horse's feet. He now turned the corner

adjoining the drawbridge, his eyes were mechanically bent on the gratings; with what surprize! with what horror! did William behold the figure so long the subject of his perplexity; it answered exactly the description he had so repeatedly heard; a chilness, he confesses came over him, and before he could recover himself the figure was vanished. "None of the branches of education which I have received (said he to himself as he rode slowly on,) have taught me to dispute the testimony of my own eyes; have I not seen this figure? What then can I think? Conjectures crowded so fast on each other in William's mind, that had it been possible, without turning round, to have missed his way, there is no saying where he might have gone.

He was roused from his reflections

by the sight of his father's house, and the joy which this occasioned drove all thoughts of the castle out of his head, he was instantly at the door, he knocked softly, his father and mother were just going to bed. "What's your pleasure, Sir?" said Mr. Seton, with a friendly voice, as he opened his window. "I have to apologize, Sir, for my untimely intrusion," said William, "but I hope the necessity which compels me to trouble you at this hour, will be a sufficient excuse. My poor horse has gone a far way, and is sorely fatigued, I must intreat your goodness therefore for a little corn, and as we are benighted, if it be convenient for you to accommodate us till morning, it will be particularly kind." A stranger never asked twice for admittance; and Mr. Seton who did not know William's disguised

voice, was at the door in a few seconds, and in one second more William was in his father's arms. The house was in an uproar—William's come home ! William's come home ! His mother, Sister, and servants were round him. "God bless him," said old Thomas, as he put up the horse, ' how tall and handsome my young master's grown,' " And I'll warrant," said Margaret, who held the candle, " he's as good as he is handsome." ' That I'll pledge my life for,' said Thomas.

While these good people were blessing William in the stable, he was giving those in the parlour an account of all that had passed in his absence. In the morning he got up early and visited his friends in the village, whose joy at seeing him again was excessive. The only intrusion on William's happiness,

which otherwise would have been complete, was the castle, and he at length came to the resolution of satisfying himself,

The evening of the first Sunday he fixed for his discoveries, and after tea, his father and mother having gone out to make a short visit, did William buckle on his sword, and summoning his martial spirits to their post, walked with gallant strides to this our wonderful castle.





CHAP. VII.

WHEN William arrived at the draw-bridge the castle bell toll'd six. There was no appearance of porter, nor human being of any description. He went along a dark walk of yew and cedar trees, at the extremity of which is a large pigeon house, one side of which is almost intirely consumed by time; having taken a particular survey of this, he

advanced along another avenue, rather darker than the former, that led to a kind of square, composed of very large oak trees ; in the middle of this square is a sort of hall or summer-house, built in the gothic stile, the walls are still in good order, and in the inside are to be seen the remains of some paintings, but in such a tattered and defaced condition, that he could not discover what they represented. William admired this building very much, not only for the picturesque appearance of its outside, but the simple and durable style of its inside, so peculiar to the gothic architecture. He wondered at the ingenuity with which the whole buiding was supported by its own gravity, the parts being so accurately adjusted, that the weight of each exactly counteracted that of the others which leaned against it ;

he then proceeded towards an opening at the south-east side of the square, where he had a near view of the corner of the castle.

He had spent many a pleasant hour contemplating the grandeur of Westminster Abbey, but at present his mind was more powerfully affected by the wild appearance of the castle: this castle had once been a strong and massy building, but time had made great ravages on it; the roof in many places was intirely demolished, and the walls of the north-west corner were in a very decayed condition. As William stood, he could perceive no signs of a possibility of its being inhabited. It was his intention to have taken a particular observation of every side of it; this, however, he found impracticable from a high wall,

which ran from one of the south corners ; on the north-east side his attempts were also frustrated by a similar wall, which had every appearance of communicating with the other. “ There is no bell to ring, nor door to knock at, so I may walk in without offence,” said William to himself, and so accordingly he did, without any other permission than what curiosity granted.

It was at a low gothic arch, William entered with difficulty, as the ruins of an adjoining turret had filled up a considerable part of it. He traversed several long passages, which were almost totally obscured by the rubbish ; at length he came to two winding staircases, one leading down and the other up ; like an ass between two bundles of hay, he was hesitating which to chuse, when the bell toll'd seven ; it toll'd

William into a cold tremor ; he now made all the speed out of the castle he could, but what with going down one wrong passage and up another, a full quarter of an hour elapsed before he reached the grated gate. The draw-bridge was up, and no porter to be seen, neither could his most earnest scrutinies discover any means by which he could drop the bridge ; his utmost strength made not the smallest impression on it. Poor soul ! at this moment he regretted more the uneasiness of his father and mother would be under for him, if he should be compelled to stay where he was till morning, than any danger that was thereby likely to accrue to himself ; this consideration kept him an hour at the gate, in hopes that somebody would pass ; not a soul came that way, and as

night began to approach, he began to wish himself any where else than where he was. He knew however that wishing was by no means likely to set him at liberty ; and as his disposition always inclined him to make the best of every thing, so he now bethought himself of what was most expedient for him to do.

Still he thought, and the more he thought the more he was convinced, that some person must live within these walls. To find them out was the question ; his thoughts were first bent on the porter, whom he searched for in vain.

The moon had just began to rise, and if his hopes did not deceive him, he saw a momentary reflection of a light from the castle ; his last resource for relieving his parents anxiety rested on that

side of the building he had not seen, the reflection which seemed to proceed obliquely from that quarter, encouraged him in his determination to explore it, and accordingly having again reached the two stair cases, he fixed upon that which led upwards; the moon was his only lanthorn, and with his sword in his hand to grope his way, he began cautiously to ascend; the steps were small and narrow, and at intervals so much broken that he almost despaired of gaining the top; he was not insensible of the danger to which he exposed himself, but his hopes depending on this passage alone, he could not think of returning.

Every thing around was still, not even a breath of wind was to be heard, which increased the horror of William's

situation; a faint ray of moon-light through a chink in the wall, enabled him to discover an entrance towards the south of the second story, it was so low that he was under the necessity of stooping for a considerable way in total darkness; in this story he wandered through many intricate windings, leading sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left; without the least idea where he was going, or through what kind of places he had passed.

Spent with fatigue and anxiety, as a trembling hare when all hopes of safety are vanished, resigns itself to the mercy of its pursuers, so did this young soldier resign himself to fate; such an awful idea had he however of every thing around him that, with all his resignation, he would gladly have exchanged his commision for his liberty, as he grop-

ed about for a corner where he might lay himself down till morning.

Few circumstances of his life had ever put him out of humour, his temper being of the most accommodating nature; but now fretted first at his own folly, and when he found no comfort from self-reproach, he blamed the government for tolerating such dangerous and useless buildings.

Poor soul, he forgot his respect for his noble master, and the wisdom by which those measures were conducted which he had voluntarily bound himself to support. He could with difficulty see the gothic style of the apartment from a few borrowed beams of moon-light. The eye lost itself in the arches, and the scantiness of light was ten times more horrible than darkness. Which ever way he turned, a frightful cavity presented itself.

From this comfortless condition, reclining on his elbow and ruminating on the distance of morning, with many unpleasant interruptions which presented themselves to his imagination, he was roused by the distant sound of music ; it was sweet at times, at times it was wild, and accorded well with the nature of the place. William listened. It was no longer to be heard ; surely he could not be deceived. He listened still, but it was gone. He rose up and walked gently towards that side from whence it proceeded, in hopes that he might again hear it more distinctly.

His chagrin was now succeeded by as many romantic ideas as he could collect from the few romances he had read, “ perhaps here is some unfortunate wretch, whom he was sent by providence to rescue from a wretched cap-

“tivity.” This last conclusion gave him so much satisfaction, and his impatience to confirm it was so lively, that his attempts were not guided by that prudence which was necessary; for in groping with too much precipitation among some stone pillars for a passage, a massy stone vase, which stood at the top of a steep flight of stairs, gave way to his touch and tumbled down. The whole castle shook with the tremendous noise, as it rolled down the broken steps; like a peal of thunder it died gradually away among the horrid echos of the caverns below.

Confounded with amazement and terror, William stood for some moments motionless; the noise still vibrated in his ear, and his heart palpitated with thankfulness for having so miraculously and narrowly escaped such danger.

The horror however with which it inspired him, produced a thousand disagreeable sensations. The accounts he had received of the castle, when a child, and the corroboration of his own eyes, recurred to him in their most dreadful colours; and no wonder that all the phantoms of a bewildered fancy were dancing in his brain at the sound of approaching footsteps. His hopes of salvation he now rested in his sword, and to it his remaining sparks of resolution hastily flew:—the footsteps were close at hand. William would have given his weight of gold, had he possessed it, to have been at home.





CHAP. VIII.

WILLIAM'S looks were bent wistfully towards a light which began to appear in the adjoining apartment; but who can describe his sensations, or who would have not plunged headlong after the vase, to have avoided that most horrible of visions, that figure which our amazed hero had seen with his own eyes, but two nights before, all be-

smeared with blood. It was really the old man of the castle, who now stood before him.

‘Who are you, young man? and how in the name of God came you here?’ He enquired with great eagerness, mixed with a little anger; but the benignity which appeared on his venerable brow, as he surveyed him, at once dispelled William’s ridiculous faith in supernatural spirits, and promised him forgiveness of his intrusion; so that being convinced that the old man was a human being as well as himself; he did not think of following the vase, but with a humility natural to him, whenever he had committed an offence, gave a minute detail of his hazardous exploits, and also with a blush explained the reasons by which they were undertaken. The old gentleman smiled at

William's enterprising spirit, and with the kindest look imaginable, he took him by the hand. 'My young friend,' said he, 'be careful how you indulge too far that propensity which has brought you here. I am an old soldier, and you are a young one. You need not be anxious to seek dangers: it is well for a soldier not to avoid them when they come, but they will come of themselves soon enough. Return thanks to God for the mercy he has shewn you, in guiding you thus far in safety. The fragments of this old building, which you have traversed have been entirely neglected for a great length of time, and from the havock it has made, I am indeed amazed you have escaped without an accident. Had not this vase, you see, continued he, pointing down

the frightful gap, been placed by the goodness of Providence in your way, your poor parents must have searched for you in vain.'

The old man's manner of speaking was so expressive of goodness, though mixed with a certain air of wildness; and was upon the whole so very opposite from what William had in justice a right to expect, that, with tears in his eyes, he hardly dared to entreat his forgiveness for the destruction of the vase. 'Give yourself no uneasiness about that my boy,' said the old man, 'I never till now considered its value; and when the noise alarmed me, I feared something much worse had happened, so that I, as well as yourself, have every reason to be thankful. Put up your sword, and when your curiosity shall be completely satisfied, you must go home

to your father. I know his worth well, and am under many and great obligations to him.' William did not understand his meaning ; but the melancholy and interesting appearance of his conductor, and the fixed sorrow which sat upon his features, had such an effect on his mind, that he was in no condition to think of any thing else. They walked along several ruinous galleries, though much more entire and stately than those through which William had wandered.

'You shall see presently, my dear,' said the old man, ' the spot where I have passed the last thirteen years of my life without molestation. Your father's kindness has saved me from the vexations of the world, which would have been unsupportable :—it has no pleasures for me.' These last words

were pronounced in such an affecting tone, that William could hardly refrain from tears.

He led William into a kind of hall, which, though the style was carefully preserved, had undergone many repairs, that added a comfortable look to its antiquity. Adjoining this were several small and commodious apartments, in which this old gentleman had lived ever since his seclusion from the world. William surveyed every thing with great attention ; a neat library of books appeared to him to be the only source of amusement this hermitage could boast of, as every thing wore such a forlorn look, and indicated a melancholy intellectual derangement in its master. He placed the taper on a table in his study ; and, after desiring William to sit down, asked him many questions about the

state of the country, and enquired particularly after a great many persons of rank. The information which William gave him of the changes that had taken place in their circumstances, many of them indeed being dead, affected him very forcibly. It was now near ten o'clock, and William rose to take leave of his new acquaintance ; who desired him to express to his father, the high sense he felt of the many obligations which his benevolence had laid him under, and invited him to the castle the next morning. ' Though you look at present upon this abode of mine with dread,' said he, ' and conceive that there are no beauties within these lonely walls, yet you must know that the fate of war will sometime deprive a soldier of his choice, and it is childish in that case to murmur.'

When William had returned a warm and suitable acknowledgment for this kind invitation, the old gentleman pulled a bell, and who should make his immediate appearance but the porter, and, to William's surprise he was now neither deaf nor dumb ! However the sight of a young man, and the uncommon animation of his master's countenance, were two objects so very unexpected to this faithful servant, that for some seconds he was actually deprived of his speech. His master, in a few friendly words, explained to him how their young brother soldier, as he called William, had taken them by surprise. This old man who had acted as steward, cook, gardener, footman, porter and nurse, for thirteen years ; and had scarcely, during all that time, received one cheerful smile from his

master ; could hardly contain the joy he felt at seeing the good spirits he was now in.

‘ We must try him as a spy,’ continued the old gentleman ; ‘ he must have one night, however, to prepare his defence, and you may let him go on his parole.’ He then shook William by the hand, and wished him good night. The porter then walked before him with a lanthorn in his hand ; the respect he had for his master forced him to confine his joy while before him ; but now that he was alone with William, he gave loose to it. He asked a thousand questions about the change of his master’s spirits, none of which he would give William time to answer. “ It’s not many years ago, my child,” said he, “ God bless him, since he was such another blooming boy as yourself,

I shall never forget how he danced when he got his red coat ; poor little boy ; how happy he was ; he was beloved by the whole regiment ; and well he might." William ventured to ask, why he led such an obscure life. " He has never looked up," said the porter in a low voice, " since his lady's death." " Was he married then ?" said William. " Aye, and to as good and handsome a lady as ever breathed," returned the porter ; but his friends disapproved of the match, and when his money run short, would give him no more ; so he went with his regiment abroad ; but he never saw his lady, nor his two pretty babes again ; it pleased God to take them all three to him at once."

The dignified and noble appearance of this unfortunate gentleman had so attached William to him, that he was as

much affected with his sufferings as if he had known him from his infancy. Having descended a stair that led into a garden, to which William paid little attention, they reached the drawbridge as the porter had finished his lamentation. After unlocking the gate, and dropping the bridge with the greatest ease, by means of a spring lock, he made a respectful bow; and, with fervent prayers that William might succeed in keeping up his master's spirits, promised to meet him at eleven o'clock the next morning, to conduct him to the castle.





CHAP. IX.

WILLIAM ran home with all the speed he could, and found, as he expected, the whole house alarmed at his staying away so late. Before he could think of going to bed, he recited the whole of his adventures to his father, who chid him rather severely for his impertinent rashness : he was sorry, he said, to find William could have any tendency to molest others, merely to satisfy an absurd curiosity.

Mr. Seton, as has been told, was extremely good-natured ; and whenever he saw the least symptoms of contrition or shame for an inconsiderate action, it was to him sufficient atonement ; so that William's countenance immediately changed his displeasure into kindness and good humour. They talked much together about the old gentleman of the castle. All that Mr. Seton knew of him was from the porter, who had called on him when they first came, and mentioned to him the state of his master's mind, and the desire he had to live a retired life ; for which end he requested, as the greatest favour that could be granted, that Mr. Seton would discharge those worldly duties for him, which he could not bear to be subjected to.¹

William and his father had hopes,

from the length of time which had elapsed since the death of his wife and children, that this old gentleman might be prevailed on to enter again into society. With these hopes they went to rest ; and William, agreeable to his engagement, walked over to the castle in the morning. The porter he found waiting for him at the gate ; and they went together to the inner garden, where the old gentleman was at work, nailing up some fruit trees, in his flannel gown, and red Indian handkerchief, which had so long borne the character of blood. He was glad to see William, and seemed to take a delight in pointing out to him the beauties of his garden. It was indeed a little paradise, laid out and dressed entirely by himself. The wall which had impeded William's progress the day before, and through

which the porter had led him by a bye-path, concealed it entirely from the outer grounds.

“ You see, my friend,” said he, “ I am not quite alone here ; I am still at the head of my little regiment ; and my young recruits are so pliable, that it is the greatest pleasure imaginable to train them. Look at this venerable veteran, how cheerfully it protects that little sickly plant with the shade of its leaves.” William was more and more charmed with his conversation ; and the old gentleman was delighted with his young friend’s frankness and modesty.

They walked in the garden for two hours, during which time William had an opportunity of viewing the habitable part of the castle, and of observing with

attention the character of his host. The only invariable features in that character were benevolence and kindness ; but, in all other respects, he could perceive a transient succession of evanescent shade. At times his conversation was lively, and discovered a rich vein of humour, a warm imagination, and a cultivated taste. But, as if despising the levity of these ideas, he would suddenly check himself. His countenance became serious and severe, but gradually the gloom dispersed, and his conversation assumed a serious mildness, that made a deep impression on the mind of the young soldier. The habitable part of the castle was not, properly speaking, a part of the ancient building, as it was a projection of a much more modern date ; the communications, however, were so blended to-

gether, that the whole must have been at one time inhabited by the same persons. This addition had been made more for use than ornament, and though, excepting the few rooms which the owner occupied, it was much out of repair, and neglected. A very little expence would have made it the most commodious and romantic spot imaginable. William continued with his host till dinner time, promising to repeat his visit the next day.

In this manner his time was divided between the castle and his father's house. The old gentleman had in a short while grown so fond of him, that he could not bear to let him be out of his sight, and William received much instruction from him, not only in Military affairs but in almost every branch of science. He illustrated the works of

nature, and the infinite bounties which a benevolent creator had heaped upon us, in such an impressive and interesting manner, and to which William listened with so much pleasure, that he soon became a young philosopher himself. In this agreeable and truly profitable manner his two months leave of absence were soon at end.

William was now a man of no small consequence, and though he was highly gratified with the good effects his company had produced on the gentleman's spirits, it must not however be supposed, he was too much taken up with self-importance not to reflect on the contrary effects his absence would create. He knew well, that to leave him entirely to his own reflections would throw him again a prey to melancholy; and accordingly he contrived, with a

little address, to introduce his father at the castle. Mr. Seton's animated conversation, and unassuming simplicity of manner, soon gained him the old gentleman's affections ; and the young soldier had the pleasure of leaving the two gentlemen mutually esteemed by each other, on his regiment being ordered to Ireland, where he remained three years, having returned only about a fortnight before his meeting with Mr. Manly and Fanny.

The porter was so much delighted with the happiness his master seemed to enjoy in Mr. Seton's company, that he found it very difficult to keep his tongue from the good folks in the village, as he was naturally of a talkative disposition ; he contrived, however, to confine his communications to Mr. Seton, who collected in their different conversations, the following short history of his unfortunate master.



CHAP. X.

THE OLD MAN OF THE CASTLE.

THIS gentleman was the second son of a Swiss nobleman, who, to avoid a political persecution, had emigrated to England with his wife, a few years after their marriage. Their circumstances were pretty affluent, and being very tenacious of their dignity, no expence was spared to furnish their two sons with the most liberal education.

A lieutenancy in a regiment, under orders for India, being procured for Pierre, who was the oldest ; their sole affection now devolved on their son who was left at home, and had not his understanding been as good as his disposition, he must have unavoidably been ruined by their imprudent indulgence. He also was destined for the army, and as these foolish people could not bear the idea of their darling's going abroad, his father purchased for him a commission in the foot-guards. At first Henry despised the ridiculous extravagance of his fellow officers, but custom, and his father's full sanction, soon reconciled him to their manner of living ; and during ten years, he had so much reduced the family fortune, and so much impaired his constitution, that he was under the necessity of spending three years on

the continent, for the recovery of his health.

In his travels through France and Italy, he had the good fortune to meet with people of sense, whose conversation led him to contrast the noble character of his brother with his own, and so disgusted him with his late wretched life, that on his return to England, in spite of his father's remonstrances, he exchanged his commission for a majority marching regiment.

He was shortly afterwards promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and having against his father's will married a most amiable young lady without fortune, his parents' fondness was converted into the most unnatural hatred, and they would never after hear his name mentioned. In vain did Henry use every endeavour to reconcile his parents

to his marriage; not from interested motives, as he considered his pay perfectly sufficient to maintain his little family; but, alas! he had been born in the midst of superfluities, and had no more idea of œconomy than the child unborn. Debts contracted with his father's consent were now demanded with the utmost rigour; poverty came with all its horrors, and they were plunged with two infants into the greatest distress. All applications to his inexorable parents were treated with the most inhuman disdain, and, in a fit of despair, Henry exchanged his commission for the command of a regiment about to embark for India.

At their parting, it would have moved the hardest heart to have seen the grief of his amiable wife, who had borne all their former misfortunes with the

greatest resignation. Having settled in the most advantageous manner possible for his family, the little property his creditors did not attach. Henry set sail with a heavy heart; his situation however was a lucrative one, and he had hopes of soon being enabled, with his brother's assistance to retrieve his affairs; the old porter was then his only attendant, and the affection of this faithful servant, tended greatly to support his master's spirits,

On their arrival at Calcutta, Henry's regiment was dispatched a great way up the country, to assist a considerable force, of which his brother's regiment was part, in quelling a serious insurrection. The meeting of these two brothers, after a separation of twenty years, was very affecting; Pierre blamed him gently for leaving his family,

and allowing himself to get into difficulties which he had it so much in his power to prevent; he agreed with Henry, that they should both return to England when the insurgents were subdued, which they expected, from the superior discipline of their troops, would be soon. Poor Pierre enjoyed these pleasing hopes but a very short time, for two days after he was brought into Henry's tent mortally wounded, and expired in his brother's arms, leaving him sole possessor of his great property.

Henry's grief for this sudden loss, and the desire of immediately revenging Pierre's death, deprived him of the caution requisite for a commander; his impetuosity having carried him too far, he was stunned with a blow and taken prisoner. When he recovered his recollection, he found himself thrown into

a dungeon, where, from dampness and bad treatment, he caught a brain fever, which confined him in a state of delirium a considerable time.

In the mean time, his servant being unable to gain any further intelligence of him, than that he had been carried off the field by two of the natives, wrote a letter to his wife, and one to his agent in London, acquainting them with Pierre's death, and the hopes he had that his master was still alive. These letters, owing to the most unfortunate accident that ever happened, did not come to hand till after the melancholy death of his wife, and both his children; for the rank of the two brothers being the same, and the place of Henry's destination being known to his wife, she immediately concluded, as well as the public, that it was her husband who had been

killed; and before it pleased God to undeceive her, she died of a broken heart.

Henry forwarded letters to his beloved wife by the very first opportunity after his release; but they came too late. This unfortunate man having arranged his late brother's affairs, was anticipating the joy of soon meeting with his family, when the dreadful accounts were brought him. It is impossible so describe his situation; the fever returned upon him, and his life was long despaired of. Through the interference of Providence, however, and the care of his indefatigable servant, he recovered; but his memory seemed almost intirely destroyed. A dreadful sullenness overspread his countenance, and he avoided speaking even to faithful Thomas.

On their arrival in England, he expressed his design of spending the rest of his days entirely secluded from the world; and being unwilling to undeceive his unnatural relations, he changed his name, and entrusting only his agent with the secret, retired to this castle, where he had spoken to no fellow-creature unless the porter, till the accidental meeting with William.





CHAP. XI.

TO return to our agreeable society at the parsonage, where the reader will remember Mr. Manly and his family were:—in their excursions about the village, Mr. Seton and he generally walked together, and left William to entertain the ladies; in the course of whose conversation with Fanny, he discovered with agreeable astonishment,

that he was in the same regiment with her much-loved brother, for whom he had a most particular friendship, William expressed the greatest delight at this discovery, and said his dear St. Vaar would love him the better for having seen his sister, whom he had so often mentioned with the most tender regard. “And I am sure Fanny will love you better for being her brother’s friend,” rejoined Miss Seton. Fanny’s answer was accompanied by a glance to her friend, which did not seem to contradict her observation. This visit to the parsonage was soon returned by Mr. Seton’s family, and the intercourse between them shortly became so frequent, that they were scarcely ever asunder, especially the two young ladies, who contracted a great fondness for one another.

William began visibly to lose his vivacity and spirits, sought solitude, often sighed, and in short gave every indication of being very unhappy. This was attributed by some to his near prospect of leaving his country ; as his regiment was shortly to embark for Gibraltar. His sister, however, was too sensible of the many attractions of Fanny, not to suspect another cause ; and his old friend of the castle bantered him significantly on his absent and sorrowful appearance. The truth is, Fanny had made sad havoc in William's heart, and she was the continual subject of his thoughts.

Immediately on the discovery that she was the sister of his dearest friend, he invited him, in a very pressing letter, to spend at his father's house the few weeks they were to be in England,

where he would have the pleasure of meeting his lovely sister, whom he described with the most enthusiastic encomiums. Henry answered his letter in person.

As Henry had been at the parsonage two years before, and had gained the affections of the whole family by his amiable and elegant manners, they were rejoiced to see him, no less on their own account than on that of Fanny. Indeed, perhaps the history of the world does not furnish another example, of so many persons being together at the same time so strongly attached to each other, as this happy party; nor could it then have taken place, had they not been every one so truly good and virtuous.

Notwithstanding the pleasure William enjoyed among his friends at home,

the old gentleman in the castle was not neglected; and Henry, who had heard of his friends adventures there, expressed the greatest desire to see it, and its lonely inhabitant. William would not use the freedom to introduce him to his old friend, but thought they might walk through the castle without any restraint; for which purpose they thought it most eligible to go before the gentleman was up, and went accordingly one morning about eight o'clock. The porter accompanied them through the building, and being at all times willing to communicate, gave them not only the history of the late improvements in the place, but likewise many anecdotes of his master and himself. None of the castle delighted Henry more than the porter himself, whose great honesty and reverence for his master pleased him.

particularly. He asked him how he could endure to live in that solitary manner without any body to speak to. "When I was as young as you, your honour," replied he, "I should have thought it a terrible restraint to do so, but when a man has undergone such hardships and dangers as I have, ease and security make amends to him for the want of many comforts. Besides, my master has always been kind and good to me, when he had little need of any thing I could do for him, and I have been with him ever since he was born, and so, please God, I shall be with him till one of us die," During Henry's conversation with the honest porter, William had gone into an adjoining thicket, where was a small ruin which he had not before seen; he called St. Vaar to come and see it. "St. Vaar!" repeated

the porter, "is that your name?" On finding it was, he seemed absorbed in thought for some seconds, and enquired if his father was alive. Henry answered that he had the misfortune while a child to lose both his parents. William who knew the porter's natural tendency to ask questions, at first paid no attention to this interrogation; but when on joining them, he perceived so many indications of interest in the old man's countenance, while he enquired after Henry's family, he wondered what circumstance could excite in him such lively curiosity.

Without any of his usual introductions, the porter proceeded to enquire of Henry, who, and what his father had been, which he answered without hesitation, that he had followed the same profession with himself, and had fallen at the

head of his regiment in India. "My mother, continued he, with a sigh, survived his death only a few months." "Gracious God!" exclaimed the porter, with a vehemence which appeared to the young soldiers to proceed from the compassion of his nature. Had not these two friends however been mutually affected by Henry's narration, they must have suspected some other cause. The porter looked Henry stedfastly in the face, and after a short silence, requested them for the love of God to sit down, which having done at the foot of an oak tree, he questioned Henry very minutely, respecting all the principal circumstances of his life, in particular the death of his mother. "I remember little or nothing of my parents," said Henry, "being only about three years of age when my mother died; all my informa-

tion was given me by Mrs. Epsom, my mother's aunt, who, immediately on my mother's death, carried my sister and myself from a small house at Hampstead, in which my father had left us." The porter here wiped away the tears that were trickling down his cheeks, and was proceeding to ask many other interesting questions, when his master came up to them with a small hoe in his hand. They hastily rose, and the porter walked away; not however without betraying to his master an unusual emotion. William went up to the old gentleman to apologise for the freedom he had taken, saying that his friend had expressed a great inclination to see the castle, and they had come so early that they might not molest him, thinking he would not be stirring, "William," said he, "make no apologies to me, you

know my humour, and that I am always happy to see you, and your friend is very welcome; but you must not think, by bringing your friends here, thus to draw me again into society; however, I will be social for once." He then conducted them into the castle, and conversed with them on different subjects. The old gentleman immediately perceived the friendship which subsisted between the two young soldiers, and having a real fatherly affection for William, he surveyed Henry very attentively, with whose open countenance, and unassuming though dignified manner he was much pleased. The youths having got no breakfast, took leave of the colonel, not however till they had both received a friendly invitation to come again to the castle. Henry, whose spirits were much depressed at the un-

happy manner of living which this gentleman chose, was silently regretting that such an elevated and noble mind should be lost, not only to society but to all enjoyment; when the porter, who had anxiously waited for them at the pidgeon-house, requested William to favour him with his company for about a quarter of an hour. Henry left them; and William immediately perceived a paleness and agitation in the porter's face, which astonished him not a little. He anxiously enquired what was the matter. The porter having collected himself in the best manner he could, discovered to William's amazement, that his master's children were certainly alive, and that this young man, who had just departed, was no other than one of them. William conceived this to be too extravagant

for belief, and begged him not to say any thing on such a delicate subject before he had well considered it ; for he understood there was no doubt of the death of the infants at the time of their mother's decease. The porter said, he never had doubted it till now, but the young gentleman had told him such particulars, as left no possibility of his being any other than his master's son : he now recollected, that the first fatal accounts of his wife's death, had unfortunately reached the colonel in an indirect manner, in which was included that of both his children, and on the melancholy confirmation of their mother's fate, his despair had never admitted a doubt that the original account was in every respect true. A long and warm conversation ensued on this interesting discovery, in which it was agreed, that

Mr. Seton should immediately be consulted on the most prudent means of disclosing it to the colonel.

It is impossible to describe William's joy at these wonderful dispensations of Providence, which were fraught with such happiness in two persons he loved so much; and the impatience of Fanny and her brother, to embrace their restored parent, on the circumstances being gradually and delicately communicated to them by Mr. Seton and Mr. Manly, confirmed by the information of the porter, was such as might have been expected; all at the parsonage congratulated them with tears of joy, on their great acquisition; and the length of this time which was necessary to make the colonel acquainted with his unlooked for happiness, seemed to them an age.

William, though Fanny's welfare was dearer to him than his own, and he was overjoyed at her sudden transition from an obscurity to which she had never appeared destined, could not but lament at the same time, the great inequality which the colonel's riches would throw between him and the object of his love.

A thousand painful ideas rushed like lightning into his mind, representing her surrounded with splendour and equipage, attended and courted by crowds of lovers, with whom the insignificance of his circumstances forbade him to cope. Henry knew his friend, and read these thoughts in his countenance, smiling in secret at the more happy consequences which he foreboded from Fanny's change of situation.

It was with the utmost caution that Mr. Seton communicated the discovery,

by degrees, to the old colonel, being afraid that any violent emotion might bring on a relapse of his disorder ; but as it had not originally proceeded from any constitutional weakness, and as he had now been for some time entirely recovered, his joy and surprise were attended with no disagreeable consequences. He begged impatiently to see his children, and was not disappointed in the expectations he had formed of his son, when he learned that the young man, who had been in the castle, was he. Mr. Manly and Mr. Seton's whole family accompanied the young couple to the first interview with their father, who embraced them both tenderly, and wept over Fanny, saying she was the very image of her mother. Fanny's emotions were not to be described, there

was something dejected in the appearance of her father, which, together with the gloominess of the place, affected her extremely. This meeting being in the morning, Mr. Seton and the rest of his friends retired in a short time, leaving colonel St. Vaar to enjoy in private with his children that delicious conversation which their company would have prevented: Mrs. Seton, however, had first prevailed on the colonel to join this happy party at dinner, to which he assented with expressions of the strongest gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Manly, for their kindness to Fanny; observing at the same time with vivacity, that they must hold him responsible only for the fashion of his own days.

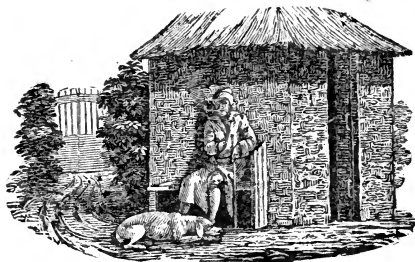
All this while, the porter forgetting his years and infirmities, was leaping and running about like a madman; such

a joyful day he had never expected to see, and no command was ever obeyed with more alacrity than his master's order to get a suit of clothes in readiness to appear with decency at the parsonage. The choice of which being left to this trusty servant, he contrived to dress the colonel in a handsome old fashioned uniform, which gave him the appearance of being at least ten years younger. Neither was the porter's joy confined to the castle alone; for having received permission to give his tongue that freedom which was so congenial to its nature, the whole circumstances of this memorable meeting were soon known to all the astonished villagers, whose simple and sincere congratulations on the bloody old man's transformation, while it flattered his feelings, evinced the interest those good people had in the

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happiness of others, and which colonel St. Vaar's liberality did not allow to pass unrewarded.





CHAP. XII.

It is impossible to describe the universal delight which reigned at the parsonage and the elegance, (though simplicity) with which good Mrs. Seton entertained her welcome guests. I shall only observe that all were fully sensible of the stability of those innocent enjoyments which are founded on virtue, and well knew how to profit by their knowledge. Colonel St. Vaar was prevailed on to stay all

night, and as Mr. and Mrs. Manly were with much regret compelled next day to return home, it was insisted on by Mr. Seton, that the colonel should put up with the accommodation of the parsonage, till the castle should be in a condition to receive his family, for which immediate orders were given. In the mean time he had no difficulty in discovering the cause of William's uneasiness, neither was he so blind as not to perceive, in defiance of Fanny's modesty, the pleasure which his uneasiness gave her. The old gentleman had been much attached to William since their first acquaintance, and indeed he had so far adopted him as his son, that, previous to his last visit at the parsonage, he had resolved not only to purchase his advancement in the army at the present, but to make him heir

of his property, which he knew no other person so worthy of possessing. The prospect therefore of an alliance between him and Fanny, gave him no small pleasure, as he could by that means have it in his power still to provide for William, while he divided his wealth between his two children. And as our readers may conceive that the proposals which he made to Mr. and Mrs. Seton to that effect, met from them very little opposition, I shall pass over the few delightful days which they occupied.

William's uncle who was now their lieutenant colonel, granted an extention to the young gentlemen's leave of absence upon receiving a humble representation of their great happiness, and in consequence of their embarkation being for the present countermanded, accompanied

however with a reprimand for the reluctance which they shewed to attend to their duty ; but William, like Mark Anthony, was now so effeminated and absorbed with his *Cleopatra*, and Henry so much delighted with all around him, that the reprimand gave neither of them very great uneasiness. They thought only of enjoying the present, and no one could accuse them of disturbing that enjoyment with unnecessary forebodings ; thus their time would have vanished imperceptibly, had not colonel St. Vaar called them to a duty of a less gratifying nature. That gentleman was, in a great measure, ignorant of the state of his affairs, and as he was very averse to leave the superintendence of the improvements which were going on at the castle, as well as to the thoughts of visiting London, he determined to send

the young soldiers thither. The necessary papers being accordingly got ready, they took their departure in a post-chaise, accompanied by the porter, who was not the least considerable person on the occasion, and who had less repugnance than his master, at the idea of seeing London once more. Colonel St. Vaar having settled every thing to his mind with Mr. and Mrs. Seton, took the opportunity of Henry and William's absence, to make himself fully acquainted with Fanny's inclinations.

"My dear," said he to her, "one day, I shall give you half my fortune, if you guess what I am about to say to you." "Nay, my dear father, how should I guess, unless it be my faults you mean to point out?" "Well, my love," returned her father, "though you

have not hit the subject, I am glad you look on me as your friend, at least if you be so reasonable as to allow that such is the office of a friend." "I do indeed, I assure you;" she said, "and though we must not look on all those who are forward in finding fault to be our friends, yet when they are enemies they hurt us very little. And I look on those as our greatest enemies, who, either from fear or policy, allow a bad action to pass without comment." "You are very right, my dear child," replied Mr. St. Vaar, "but you may rest satisfied, that even envy itself will not dare to make accusations without some grounds; so that we have it always in our power to turn ill-natured insinuations to our profit." "But pray," said Fanny "whence proceeds that great fear or reluctance, which so many people have,

who really seem to possess a friendship for us, of condemning an action which though evidently not ill meant, might from inadvertancy or mistake turn out wicked?" "It proceeds, my dear," answered the colonel, "from what the world term politeness, a term which if were universally followed to its utmost extent, would obscure all our senses. Politeness resembles the rouge of France; a sallow face has been the cause of the one, and brutal manners and dispositions that of the other; fashion however discerns as little the superior beauty of the bloom of youth over paint, as the superiority of natural elegance and propriety over formality and restraint." "But surely, said Fanny, 'all who possess politeness are not formal.'" "By no means answered

colonel St. Vaar, "those who cultivate a natural politeness, which is little else than goodness and discrimination, will not become so. Mr. and Mrs. Manly, for instance my dear, are polite, and you see they are very delightful people. Mr. and Mrs. Seton would not hurt the feelings of a beggar with a rude expression; and my boy William does not want feeling, though I question much if he is sufficiently devoid of gallantry to tell my pretty Fanny her faults." Fanny blushed at the significant look of her father, and answered hastily that he was the rudest friend she had, as he pointed out more faults than all her other friends besides; "because he loves you better than all your other friends, cried her father, tenderly embracing her, while a few tears fell down her lovely face which was tinted with an emphatic blush that

all the painters in the world could never imitate. Thus did the good old gentleman, in the most delicate and tender manner, become acquainted with his daughter's mind, which was opened by all the simplicity of the purest innocence.

Colonel St. Vaar's agent who had been on all occasions, one of his best friends, and had long and sincerely lamented his melancholy situation ; was so rejoiced at the change that had taken place and at the sight of his son whom he had often seen while an infant, that he would not hear of their immediately returning to the castle, but insisted on their spending ten days at his house in London, no doubt a little against William's inclinations. So much happiness and cheerfulness however reigned

in this gentleman's family and they were treated with such unaffected kindness, that this absence from his Fanny did not even to him appear tedious. During this stay the good effects which constant employment produces on the mind were very powerfully exemplified to them, and they returned to their friends much attached to their worthy entertainer, and to his respectable manner of living.

Shortly after the hands of Fanny and William were joined by the good parson, in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Manly, to the great delight of their friends, and the unspeakable joy of the villagers, who left nothing undone which cheerfulness could devise, to testify on the occasion the interest they had in their favourite's welfare. Thus our little history draws near to an end, and it is

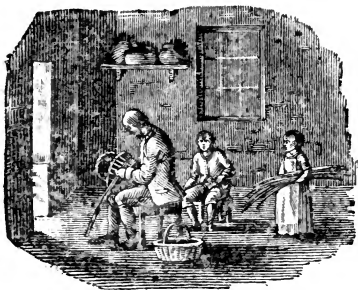
to be hoped that all those of my young readers, who are aware of the many enjoyments which virtue points out, and which it always obtains, will not envy the happiness of William and his Fanny, but follow their steps, and learn by their example to gather the fruits of benevolence.

Colonel St. Vaar insisted on William resigning his commission, being himself possessed of too fatal an experience of the misfortunes attending a soldiers marriage, and the fear and anxiety which constantly intrudes on the most secure enjoyments of his family. He resides with his wife at the castle, which is now a paradise, and where heaven blesses them with the means of relieving the distresses of the unfortunate, and encouraging the exertions of industry, Mr. and Mrs. Manly still continue in

the closest habits of intimacy with them, and having no children of their own, their kindness for Fanny is not in any way diminished by her change of situation. Henry, on whose modest mind, so long habituated to its humble expectations, his father's circumstances produced the most lively sensations, has lately received a company of light dragoons, and promises to be an honour to his country, as his military ardour suffers no abatement from his fortune; he calls William a turn-coat, and expresses no uneasiness at his father's determination to have no red-coat marriages in his family; notwithstanding which the porter gives it as his opinion, that the red-coat would make but a feeble resistance to a serious attack from such a lady as Miss Seton. As for Miss Trunse, she is now heartily despised by her neigh-

bours for her haughtiness towards Fanny, and her riches, I am afraid, are far from procuring her happiness. The porter's age is now very great, but his spirits shew no signs of approaching dissolution. In peace with all the world, and contented with himself, he now smokes his pipe; and when it shall please God to receive him to himself, he will obey without a sigh.





THE BASKET MAKER.

A FRAGMENT.



CONTENTED with the earnings of honest industry, the humble basket-maker finishes his daily task. Twenty little baskets bring twenty pence to his smiling family ; pleased with the assistance which they gave their father in his work,

his little-ones now cling about his knee, while their cheerful mother prepares their homely meal. "How loud the wind blows, father,!" said the oldest of his two boys, "if you had no cottage to cover us, we should all die with cold; these hail-stones would kill poor little Peter." "But God has given us a shelter, my dear child, and we should be very wicked and ungrateful not to return thanks for his great benevolence." "And why," said the child, "does not God who is so good, give a house to every body? for my mother told me that many poor people die in the rain and snow, and she says, that God sees all over the world at once." "There is another world besides this one, where God allows the good to go after they die; and when it pleases him to make our lives appear uncomfortable, or our death

painful, it is to try our fortitude, and know whether we are good enough to be his children.' " But how do you know that God will let these poor people go to heaven if he never told you so ?" 'When you can read the scriptures, they will explain this to you ; besides, my dear, he is so good to us, and shews us every moment so many instances of the care he takes of us, that we could not suppose he would take any pleasure in making any of us unhappy.' " If all those who die of cold and hunger go to heaven, why did my mother cry so for the old woman who died in the wood ?" ' God has given us a weakness,' said the basket-maker, ' which makes us feel for the death of our fellow creatures, otherwise we might not be so kind to one another as he wishes us to be ; all who die of cold and hunger are not good,

and none but good people can go to heaven. God you see, gives me health and strength to work, which enables me to have this little comfortable cottage, and to give all of us food and clothes; but were I to be idle and neglect my work, we should have none of these; and if I should then die with cold and want, it would be my fault, and I should not deserve to go to the same place with good people.'

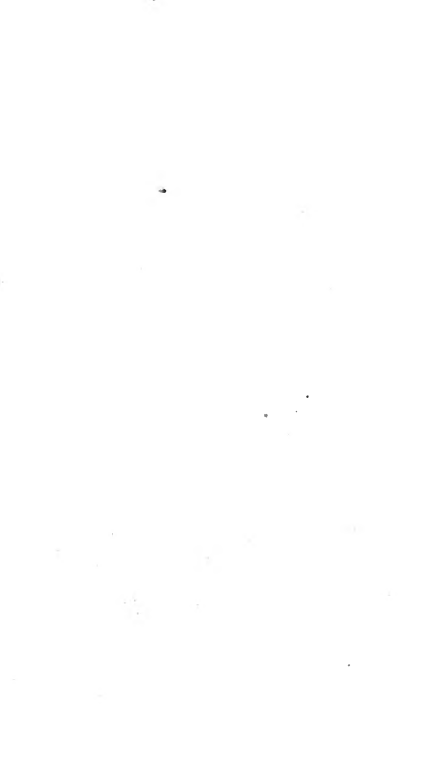
The wind increased, and the hail and snow drifted violently against the window; the little supper was ready, and the basket-maker sighed for the helpless, while the storm raged through the forest and drowned the cries of the benighted; the children creep to their mother in silent dread at the sound of screams. In an instant the basket-ma-

ker flies to the wood, and returns with the almost lifeless body of the wretched Edmund. The good man did not recognize his nephew's emaciated face, nor would his own injuries then have recurred to his mind ; they had long been erased from it, and its mildness had long forgiven their author.

The eyes of the stranger, opened by the genial heat of the cottage, were fixed stedfastly on his preserver, whose mean attire, struck him with shame ; he looked wildly at Mary, and at the implements of his uncle's humble profession, and burst into an agony of tears. " Is it possible you can forgive the greatest villain that ever breathed ? " he exclaimed, while he fell upon his knees, " Do you not recollect your nephew ; that wretch who robbed you of your all ? here he is, imploring your pity, if

he cannot hope for your forgiveness. Nothing has thriven with him since he forced you out of your house, which has since been to him the worst of torments. My wife and my children are all dead ; I am despised by my neighbours, and my servants hate me ; I have long given you up for dead ; return with your excellent wife, and these charming babes, to your home, and leave me here to implore the mercy of my God !"





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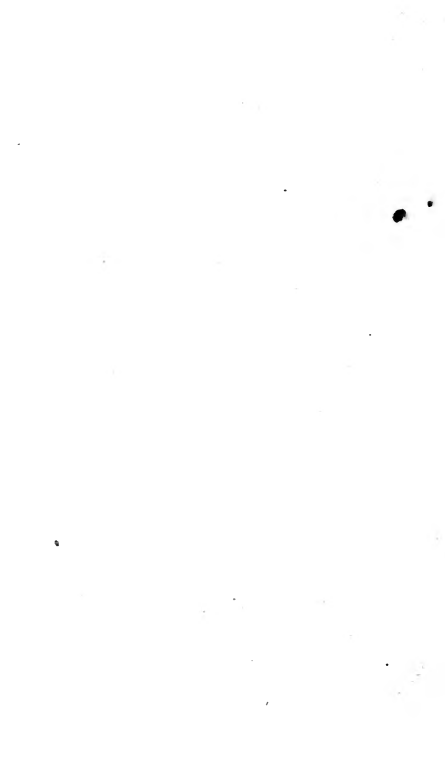
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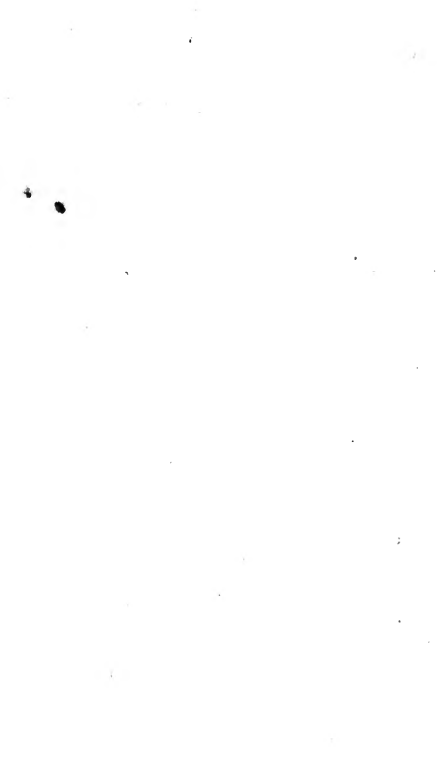
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